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I.U.F.O.P.R.A. NEWSLETTER : SPECIAL EDITION - August, 1994:

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TO ALL MEMBERS: The following is a special edition of the Newsletter to bring to the attention of Members an incident which has caused great embarrassment and humiliation to IUFOPRA.

It began two weeks ago, when we received a letter from our National Broadcasting Service, RTE (Radio Centre). It was from a Producer, Mr Michael Holmes, who presents a chat show called 'Talk Radio' which is broadcast every Saturday morning from 10am - 11am on RTE Radio 1.

In his letter Mr Holmes explained to us that to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of the Moon Landing he wanted to do a programme on ufos and to interview an organisation regarding same.

My Co-Director Pat Delaney, phoned Mr. Holmes at RTE a few days later to finalise the arrangements. He told us that this interview would put IUFOPRA on the map nationally and so we agreed to do the interview on this basis. He also told Pat that he would particularly like to talk about Rosewell and the wave of ufo sightings over Ireland on March 30/31st, 1993.

As soon as we received the letter we left an IUFOPRA Information pack along with miscellaneous informations about ufos etc for Mr Holmes at RTE. On Thursday August 11th, we arrived at the RTE studios at 5.15pm to do the recording for the Talk Radio programme to be aired on August 13th.

As we knew that we were going to be grilled on Rosewell and the March 31st sightings we did our homework and had dossiers prepared in advance on both.

We duly arrived at the studio for what we thought was going to be an indepth serious discussion on IUFOPRA, Rosewell, Ufos and the March sightings. Before we did the actual recording Mr Holmes told us that he was skeptical about ufology in general and that would be the perspective he would take during the interview which lasted altogether about 13 to 14 mins. approximately. We made it quite clear that we had no objection whatsoever to his skepticism as we feel that a healthy skeptical attitude towards ufology is a positive thing and we have no problem accepting that. During the last 20 years we have come across in a mainly private capacity people who have had very skeptical views towards ufology and who even ~~misused~~ us as well and so this is something that we have expected and coped with over the years.

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Eventually the recording got under way. Mr Holmes began to talk about ufos almost immediately without giving us time to recollect our thoughts. In his introduction he talked about spaceships actually having landed in Ireland, [which is not the case at all. For as long as we have been involved in ufology, i.e. 20 years, our research has shown that over the years there have been numerous sightings reported but no actual landings or indeed abductions either] but he did not give us enough time to explain that this was not so. We felt that at this stage he had us 'on the spot' and both of us were feeling extremely uncomfortable at his line of questioning and with the way the whole interview was going.

He then asked us about MIBs and Pat related an experience that he had had many years ago. Next he got around to asking us about the March 31st sightings which was our most important case to date. We worked with our colleagues in England, as well as the MOD, the Irish Air Corps and many others on this case and our PRO Karl Morris produced a 22 page detailed report of same, a copy of which we had given to Mr Holmes previously. At this point the interview ended with Mr Holmes informing us that he had no time to discuss Rosewell with us but that he would mention a bit about it on the air.

On leaving the studio, we remarked to each other that neither of us felt happy with the way the interview went and we were especially disappointed that he did not ask us about Rosewell especially as we had prepared a dossier on it.

On Saturday August 13th, Talk Radio was Aired from 10am to 11am. We should mention also that the whole programme was not about ufos - there were other topics which were not related to the ufo phenomenon.

On hearing the actual interview we were totally horrified as it slowly emerged that we had been "set up" for ridicule and innuendo as well as character assassination. As we mentioned earlier, we did not object to the presenter's skeptical line of questioning but as the programme progressed it became apparent that his attitude was very one-sided.

We are well aware that this kind of thing is common in ufology and we can take criticism and live with it as long as it is constructive and that something can be learned from it. However, this was not criticism as such - as far as we could see the whole incident was viewed by Mr Holmes as nothing more than a highly entertaining and amusing spectacle with both of us emerging as the proverbial scapegoats. All in all, the whole thing made both of us look ridiculous in the eyes of the nation and judging by the telephone calls coming into the programme the callers didn't think much of us either, with one person describing us as a naive and another saying that we should be seen by men in white coats.

It made both of us look like we did not know what we were talking about and that "we were two ufo nuts who had nothing better to do with our time than going around chasing after Aliens"! The whole idea of doing this programme was to give IUFOGRA the recognition it deserved nationwide and we have no doubt that as a result of this programme our credibility rate is probably zero by now especially with our Irish Members.

Basically that is the incident as it happened but this fiasco would not not have occurred if Mr Holmes had included the following which

was important to let listeners now just how seriously we take ufology in this country: (1) he should have asked us about IUFOGRA - what it is, what it aims are etc. so the listeners did not know that [a] we are Ireland's only independent ufo and paranormal research association [b] that it was set up by both of us, with the purpose of conducting and encouraging unbiased Scientific Research of ufos and related phenomena throughout Ireland and the world. [c] we have a team of fully qualified investigators and researchers [including ourselves] who carry out on site field investigation of reported

cases as well as collecting and disseminating evidence and data relating to ufos and the paranormal. [d] we produce the IUFOGRA JOURNAL and Monthly Newsletters and [e] that people can become members of our organisation for £12 a year.

2. All Information is Data Protected and is treated as "HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL".

3. It is also our policy to protect the identity of our witnesses and to respect their right to remain anonymous.

4. IUFOGRA recognises that there are a number of explanatory hypotheses and does not advocate to any one particular theory. We also fully recognise that ninety percent of objects seen in the night sky are identified as astronomical phenomena and its the ten percent that cannot be identified as such that we concern ourselves with.

5. Mr Holmes omitted the report on the March 31st sightings from the programme even though we actually recorded it and he did say that he would particularly like to talk about this on the air. Had this been included like we were told it would be, then it would have certainly strengthened the cause for IUFOGRA'S credibility.

6. If Rosewell had been discussed on the air as he said it would be then this too would have furthered our cause for credibility.

As a result of this fiasco, we now have to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and start all over again at getting our reputation re-established in Ireland. Thankfully we have established ourselves abroad and liase with some of the worlds's finest ufo organisations and Ufologists, so our reputation abroad is solid.

It is a sad fact that Ireland, like Australia, has still a very closed minded attitude to the ufo phenomenon and despite our efforts to get the subject to be taken seriously, it looks like it will be some time in the very distant future before people begin to take this subject very seriously! Perhaps some day they will take it and us seriously, but as usual when its too late!

In conclusion one thing is clear from all this is that Talk Radio badly damaged our reputations both as ufologists/ACIs and as private individuals and we are extremely worried as to what our Irish Members now think of us as a UFO and Paranormal Research Association. We have also learned a very sad lesson the hard way and that is that we will never again do a media interview for anyone regardless of who it is and especially for RTE.

To this end we would ask you the members to support us by expressing your disapproval to RTE and Talk Radio [we have already contacted them ourselves] over the way we were treated and how the whole thing was handled by Mr Holmes. The address to write to is: Mr Michael Holmes, Talk Radio, RTE Radio Centre, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

Your support as always is greatly appreciated and we do apologise for the lenght of this newsletter but we felt we had to bring you the true facts of this disgraceful situation as they happened.

Signed, this date: 15th, August, 1994.

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